Beyond First Impressions

Track how character types shape a story's message.

9.RL.1.C "Differentiate between character types in literary texts (e.g., dynamic/round character, static/flat character, and stereotype) and their impact on the theme."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that reveal Mara's thoughts or choices, circle details that show Velez's repeated attitude, and write 1 beside details that first suggest an assumption about Jace and 2 beside details that challenge it. These marks will help you compare character types and their effect on the story's message.

The Court Vote

1 On the morning the city council planned to close the worn basketball court, Mara Ruiz arrived at the recreation center with a folder of repair costs. She had spent weeks collecting cracked backboard measurements and interviews from players. Yet when the hearing began, Mara hid the folder under her chair. She remembered laughing when her older brother said adults never listened to teenagers. Across the room, Councilman Velez sorted papers without looking up. Beside Mara, Jace slouched in a hoodie, tapping his skateboard against his shoe.

2 Velez announced that the court was "only a place for trouble." Mara nearly stayed silent, but Jace whispered that he had taught his little sister to shoot there. His voice was quiet, and he did not offer another detail. Mara stood, described the broken lights, and read a player's statement about walking home before dark. Velez replied that young people always wanted expensive projects. He repeated the same complaint after a parent explained that volunteers could paint the fence. Mara's hands shook, but she asked whether the council could visit the court before voting.

3 That evening, Velez visited only because a reporter had called. At the court, he saw Jace kneeling beside two children, tying a loose net with twine. Velez still said the building was a waste of money, then walked back to his car. Mara watched Jace lead the children in a shooting drill. She opened her folder again and asked the reporter to print the repair estimates. By week's end, neighbors had raised enough for new lights. Mara no longer expected adults to dismiss her. She learned that speaking with evidence could gather support.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why can Mara be considered both a dynamic and a round character? Use details from the passage.

2. Velez is a static, fairly flat character. Which details support this idea, and how does his unchanging view affect the conflict?

3. Jace is first introduced through a familiar skater stereotype. Which details create that impression, and which later actions make him more than that stereotype?

4. How do Mara's change, Velez's lack of change, and the challenged assumption about Jace develop a theme of the passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 6 to 8 sentence scene about a group solving a problem. Include a dynamic, round character; a static, flat character; and a stereotype that is challenged by evidence. After the scene, write one sentence explaining how the character types develop a theme.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond First Impressions

GRADE 9 · 9.RL.1.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that reveal Mara's thoughts or choices, circle details that show Velez's repeated attitude, and write 1 beside details that first suggest an assumption about Jace and 2 beside details that challenge it. These marks will help you compare character types and their effect on the story's message. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why can Mara be considered both a dynamic and a round character? Use details from the passage.	**Mara is dynamic because she moves from hiding her folder and expecting dismissal to speaking publicly and sharing evidence. She is round because the passage shows her fear, doubt, determination, and growing confidence.**
2	Velez is a static, fairly flat character. Which details support this idea, and how does his unchanging view affect the conflict?	**Velez calls the court a place for trouble, claims young people always want expensive projects, and still calls the building a waste after visiting it. His fixed attitude creates an obstacle that Mara must challenge.**
3	Jace is first introduced through a familiar skater stereotype. Which details create that impression, and which later actions make him more than that stereotype?	**His hoodie, skateboard, and slouching posture create the first impression. Teaching his sister, repairing the net, and leading children in a drill show that he is helpful and responsible.**
4	How do Mara's change, Velez's lack of change, and the challenged assumption about Jace develop a theme of the passage?	**Together, they show that quick assumptions can be wrong and that speaking with evidence and seeing people clearly can build support for change.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At first, Lena assumed the quiet new student, Amir, was a computer genius because he wore a robotics-team shirt. When her bridge model collapsed, she wanted to quit. Amir admitted that he was better at drawing than coding, then showed Lena how to test one joint at a time. Lena listened, rebuilt the bridge, and asked him to plan the display with her. Mr. Cole continued to say that the project was already too late, even after the bridge held. At judging, Lena thanked Amir for his patient testing rather than calling him a genius. Lena's change and Mr. Cole's refusal to change show that careful listening can replace quick assumptions.

Accept equivalent character labels when students support them with accurate passage evidence. For the open task, accept varied themes if the scene clearly shows how the character types help develop the stated message.